

AMENDED CLAIM SET

The claims have been amended as follows:

Claims 1-86 (canceled)

87. (new) A backlight apparatus, comprising:

a long tubular fluorescent tube; and

a pair of inverter transformers for converting input voltages into high voltages and supplying high voltages having opposite phases to the ends of the fluorescent tube,

wherein each of the pair of inverter transformers is positioned near the ends of the fluorescent tube for supplying the high voltages to the fluorescent tube.

88. (new) A backlight apparatus, comprising:

a long tubular fluorescent tube;

a pair of inverter transformers for converting input voltages into high voltages and supplying high voltages having opposite phases to the ends of the fluorescent tube,

wherein one of the pair of inverter transformers is positioned near one end of the fluorescent tube, and the other inverter transformer is disposed near the other end of the fluorescent tube.

89. (new) The backlight apparatus according to claim 87 or 88, wherein each of the pair of inverter transformers is provided in each of a pair of inverter circuits.

90. (new) The backlight apparatus according to claim 89, comprising:  
  
a plurality of the fluorescent tubes; and  
  
a plurality of the pair of inverter circuits,  
  
wherein the plurality of the fluorescent tubes are disposed in parallel to one another so that the longitudinal directions thereof are substantially oriented to the same direction, and  
  
wherein at least a pair of inverter circuits, which are positioned on the same-end side of the plurality of the fluorescent tubes disposed in parallel such that the inverter circuits are adjacent to each other in the direction in which the plurality of the fluorescent tubes are disposed, the inverter circuits being connected in a synchronized manner.

91. (new) The backlight apparatus according to claim 87 or 88, comprising a plurality of the fluorescent tubes,  
  
wherein the plurality of the fluorescent tubes are disposed in parallel to one another so that the longitudinal directions thereof are substantially oriented to the same direction , the apparatus further comprising a plurality of the pair of inverter transformers for supplying high voltages having opposite phases to the ends of each of the plurality of the fluorescent tubes.

92. (new) The backlight apparatus according to claim 87 or 88, comprising a plurality of the fluorescent tubes,  
  
wherein the plurality of the fluorescent tubes are disposed in parallel to one another so that the longitudinal directions thereof are substantially the same,  
  
wherein the pair of inverter transformers each have a plurality of secondary windings for outputting high voltages, and

wherein voltages from the plurality of secondary windings of one of the pair of inverter transformers are supplied to the same ends of adjacent fluorescent tubes of the plurality of the fluorescent tubes.

93. (new) A liquid crystal display device comprising the backlight apparatus according to claim 87 or 88 and a liquid crystal panel.

94. (new) An inverter circuit used in a pair for driving a long fluorescent tube provided in a backlight apparatus,

wherein, when a pair of the inverter circuits are used for driving the fluorescent tube, one of the pair is positioned near one end of the fluorescent tube and the other is disposed near the other end of the fluorescent tube.

95. (new) A fluorescent-tube lighting apparatus that is provided in a backlight apparatus comprising a long fluorescent tube, the apparatus comprising a pair of the inverter circuits of claim 94 for driving the fluorescent tube,

wherein each of the pair of inverter circuits is disposed near the ends of the fluorescent tube for supplying voltages to the ends of the fluorescent tube.